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**Program Review & Investigations Committee
Testimony of Jillian Gilchrest, Assistant Policy Director
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**SB 989, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and
Investigations Committee Concerning a Plan for Public Institutions of Higher Education to
Reduce the State's Achievement Gap
Tuesday, March 5, 2013**

Senator Kissell, Representative Mushinsky and members of the Program Review & Investigations Committee. My name is Jillian Gilchrest and I am the Assistant Policy Director at the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS).

Founded in 1910, CAHS promotes family economic security strategies that empower low-income working families to achieve financial independence. CAHS participates in a variety of partnerships statewide, like our VITA work—Together, with the IRS and local community coalitions, CAHS coordinates an annual Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Campaign across Fairfield, New Haven, and Litchfield Counties. CAHS is also the Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT grantee, releasing data on many indicators of well-being that impact Connecticut's families and children.

CAHS supports SB 989, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning a Plan for Public Institutions of Higher Education to Reduce the State's Achievement Gap. A number of factors impact life's opportunities in our state. Where a child grows up, how well she does in school, her parents' education and their financial and social assets significantly impact whether she will succeed or fail economically in life.

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, over the next four years, one-third of jobs will require a Bachelor's degree. These will pay significantly higher wages than jobs that have little or no academic requirement for employment. CAHS is happy to see the Program Review & Investigations Committee addressing ways to reduce Connecticut's achievement gap and improve Higher Education.

Thank you.